

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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UNCLAS QUEBEC 0148

E.O.: 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: POLITICAL REACTION TO GOQ LANGUAGE WHITE PAPER

REF: QUEBEC 143

1. PQ LANGUAGE WHITE PAPER ISSUED FRIDAY HAS GENERATED CONSIDERABLE REACTION IN PROVINCE. REACTION FROM POLITICAL LEADERS GENERALLY FOLLOWED PARTY LINES WITH PQ APPROVING AND LIBERALS STRONGLY CONDEMNING PROPOSALS WHICH ARE BASIS FOR LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED IN LATE APRIL. RENE LEVESQUE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE HOPES FRENCH LANGUAGE CHARTER WILL BE ENACTED BY JUNE 24, ST. JEAN BAPTISTE DAY WHICH IS QUEBEC'S NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

2. NOT SURPRISINGLY, 300 DELEGATES TO PQ NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 2 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED PROJECT LINGUISTIC CHARTER AND GAVE ITS AUTHOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER CAMIL LAURIN A STANDING OVATION. RADICALS AT MEETING SAID THEIR FAVORABLE VOTE FOR CHARTER DID NOT CONTRADICT RECENT MONTREAL REGIONAL MEETINGS WHICH PROPOSED EVEN TOUGHER LEGISLATION BUT RATHER SIGNIFIED REALIZATION GOVERNMENT MUST HAVE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE THAN PARTY. LAURIN INVITED DELEGATES NOT TO ASSUME AIR OF TRIUMPH BUT
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RATHER IMAGE OF PEOPLE ENTERING MATURELY INTO NEW ERA IN THEIR HISTORY.

3. AT LEAST ONE PQ DEPUTY, GERALD GODIN, HAS DISAGREED WITH SOME PARTS OF WHITE PAPER. HE TOLD ANGLOPHONE COLLEGE AUDIENCE IN MONTREAL THAT GOQ SHOULD NOT FORCE ENGLISH-CANADIANS WHO MOVE TO QUEBEC TO SEND THEIR CHILDRENS TO FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS.

GODIN SAID HE WAS ALSO OPPOSED TO CHANGING ENGLISH PLACE NAMES IN QUEBEC. HE SUGGESTED SECTIONS OF CHARTER WHICH HAD BEEN TERMED UNCONSTITUTIONAL BY SEVERAL FEDERAL CABINET MINISTERS MAY BE AIMED AT OPENING GATES TO DISCUSSION AND DEBATE ON THE CONSTITUTION WITH OTTAWA. (COMMENT: FORMERLY KNOWN AS A PQ RADICAL, &9\$8,- WHO DEFEATED FORMER PREMIER BOURASSA IN MERCIER RIDING- HAS ADOPTED A MODERATE, PRAGMATIC IMAGE IN RECENT MONTHS. AS HE IS A GOOD FRIEND OF PREMIER LEVESQUE. MANY FEEL HE IS OFTEN LAUNCHING TRIAL BALLOONS FOR PREMIER. IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, IT WOULD SEEM THAT LEVESQUE HAS ALREADY EFFECTIVELY CLOSED DOORS TO DEBATE CENTERED ON EXISTING CONSTITUTION)

4. QUEBEC LIBERAL LEADER, GERARD D. LEVESQUES, ATTENDED DAY-LONG STRATEGY SESSION OF LIBERAL GENERAL COUNCIL APRIL 2 AND EMERGED CALLING WHITE PAPER A TOTALITARIAN DOCUMENT THAT TRAMPLES ON RIGHTS OF PROVINCE'S ENGLISH-SPEAKING MINORITY. WHILE STRESSING THAT HE HAS NOT YET HAD TIME TO DIGEST POLICY PROPOSALS LEVESQUE SAID SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS MAY WELL VIOLATE PARTS OF THE QUEBEC CHARTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH FORBIDS DISCRIMINATION ON BASIS OF LANGUAGE. GOQ SEEMS TO BE ACTING AS IF MANY THOUSANDS OF ANGLOPHONES IN QUEBEC SHOULD NOT EXIST, LEVESQUE STATED. HE OPINED THAT WHITE PAPER INDICATES RADICALS IN PQ CABINET WON OUT OVER MODERATES IN BATTLE OVER NEW LANGUAGE POLICY. GERARD LEVESQUE CONCLUDED THAT FORMER LIBERAL GOVERNMENT'S BILL 22 STRESSED INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE USE OF FRENCH RATHER THAN COERCION AND SANCTION OF WHITE PAPER. WHILE LEVESQUE VOICED CONCERN FOR ANGLOPHONES HE STILL HAD LITTLE CRITICISM FOR EFFECT OF CHARTER ON FRENCH-SPEAKERS. PROVINCIAL OPPOSITION LEADERS STILL APPEAR TO BE HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING POLITICAL STRATEGY TO OPPOSE WHITE PAPER

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BASIC OBJECTIONS. (SEE REFTTEL)

5. AS AN ANGLOPHONE, LIBERAL JOHN CIACCIA WHO OPPOSED BILL 22 IN 1974 HAS NO SUCH INTERNAL CONFLICT. HE DESCRIBED POLICY PAPER AS 'INTELLECTUAL TERRORISM'. HE SPOKE OF IT AS DEFENSIVE DOCUMENT OF A PEOPLE WITH NO SELF CONFIDENCE WHO ARE TRYING TO PROTECT THEIR SOCIETY BY KEEPING IT CONTROLLED AND CLOSED. HE REPORTED THAT HIS CONSTITUENTS IN PREDOMINANTLY ENGLISH RIDING OF MOUNT ROYAL WERE BURNING UP TELEPHONE WIRES EXPRESSING THEIR ANGER AND FRUSTRATION.

6. SPEAKING TO LOCAL PC MEETING WHICH NOMINATED MAURICE HAMEL AS PC CANDIDATE IN LANGELEIR (QUEBEC CITY) RIDING BY ELECTION, JOE CLARK SAID COURTS WILL HAVE TO PROTECT RIGHTS OF ANGLOPHONE MINORITY IN PENDING LEGISLATION 'SWEEPS THEM AWAY'. OTHERWISE, IT IS SOLELY UP TO QUEBECOIS TO DECIDE PRINCIPLES OF FUTURE LAW, PC LEADER ADDED. HE SAID IT WOULD BE SHAME IF LANGUAGE LAW SHORT- MOVEMENT FAVORABLE TO QUEBEC'S ASPIRATIONS WHICH IS BUILDING UP ACROSS CANADA. HE CALLED FOR PRUDENCE ON PART OF QUEBECOIS AND

THEIR GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT REPUTATION QUEBEC HAS BUILT UP FOR
GOOD TREATMENT OF ITS MINORITIES AND WARNED THAT IMPACT OF
LANGUAGE LAW ON ECONOMY AND INVESTMENT COULD BE UNFAVORABLE.
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